



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244-1850

Ref: S&C-02-11

DATE: DECEMBER 20, 2001

FROM: Director
Survey and Certification Group
Center for Medicaid and State Operations

SUBJECT: Nursing Home Off-Hour Data Indicator in OSCAR

TO: Associate Regional Administrator, DMSO
State Survey Agency Directors

The purpose of this memorandum is to alert you to a change in the off-hour data indicator (sometimes referred to as staggered surveys) in the OSCAR system.

Background

As part of the Nursing Home Oversight Improvement Program (formerly the Nursing Home Initiative), State survey agencies were to start 10% of their nursing home surveys off-hours. The purpose of this specific initiative was to increase the unpredictability of when a survey would occur. To help track the specific surveys that were "off hour" or "staggered surveys", a data indicator was included on the OSCAR system. In that data field, three initials were accepted: M – for "morning", E – for "evening" and "W" for weekend. As we've had a few years experience with the off hour surveys we would like more information about the off-hour survey.

New Data Indicator

For the 'off hour' field, only a Y for "yes" or N for "no" will be accepted. In addition, a field for the time of day and day of the week will be captured. These fields are required if the off hour field is "Y".

Effective Date

The data fields will be required for surveys completed after January 1, 2002.

Training

This policy should be shared with all survey and certification staff, their managers and the State/Regional Office training coordinator.

/s/
Steven A. Pelovitz